

## You Can...

### Promote Community Action

Just as you can help control mosquito populations around your home, communities also can take an active, responsible role. Over-watering parks, golf courses and public recreation areas should be avoided. Applying pesticides in community parks or neighborhood common areas should be left to licensed applicators. Professionals can apply pesticides safely so that residents and the environment are not harmed. Pesticides can be extremely dangerous if not applied correctly.



Counties and communities can form mosquito abatement districts to help control mosquito populations. Abatement districts develop effective, long-term plans to control mosquito populations and are funded through each community's tax base. By Idaho law, abatement districts are the only public entity that can provide area-wide mosquito control. Contact your county commissioners about forming a mosquito abatement program in your community.



### For More Information:

The following web sites offer good information with links to other helpful sites.

- For general health information:  
[www.idahohealth.org](http://www.idahohealth.org) and [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm)
- About the safe use of pesticides:  
[www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/insectrp.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/insectrp.htm)
- About horses and the equine vaccine:  
[www.agri.state.id.us](http://www.agri.state.id.us) and [www.equinewestnile.com/vaccine.htm](http://www.equinewestnile.com/vaccine.htm)
- About wildlife and WNV:  
[www2.state.id.us/fishgame](http://www2.state.id.us/fishgame)

For information about reporting dead birds contact your District Health Department or your local Fish and Game office.

If you have other health-related questions, please contact your District Health Department.



## YOU CAN...

# Fight the Bite!



*West Nile Virus*

## You Can Fight the Bite!

West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause serious illness. WNV is relatively new to North America and has spread rapidly across the United States since its discovery in New York in 1999.

People and animals catch WNV from infected mosquitoes. Infections have not occurred by person-to-person or animal-to-person contact. There is no vaccine for people.

Most people bitten by an infected mosquito do not become ill, although some may experience a mild fever, headaches and body aches. Less than one percent of those people infected with WNV will suffer serious complications such as inflammation of the brain or paralysis. In severe cases, WNV infection can even lead to death, so it is important to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.



## You Can...Protect Yourself

WNV can infect anyone, but it can be more serious for people who are over the age of 50. You can protect yourself and your family from harmful mosquito bites by taking precautions.

- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to exposed clothing or skin, following the instructions on the product label.
- For the safety of children between the ages of 2-12 years, use a repellent containing less than 10 percent DEET.
- Ask your doctor or pediatrician about using repellent on children under the age of 2.
- Mosquitoes can bite anytime, but are generally more active at dawn and dusk, so be extra careful at these times.

## You Can...

### Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. You can protect yourself by reducing mosquito breeding sites around your home and property. If you have a bird bath or decorative pond, change the water or clean it every 3-6 days. Remove containers on your property that can collect water, such as old tires, children's toys or flower pots.

Repair or install screens on your home. Clean your rain gutters and check for proper drainage around your home, making sure your sprinkler or irrigation system is not creating puddles.

## You Can ...

### Vaccinate Your Horse

A licensed WNV vaccine is available for horses.

Generally, dogs, cats and most livestock are not threatened by WNV, but horses are an exception. One-third of unvaccinated horses that develop illness from WNV infection die. The vaccine takes approximately five weeks to become effective, so talk to your veterinarian about vaccinating your horse before it is exposed to mosquitoes.

You also can protect your horses by reducing mosquito breeding habitat around your stable and pasture. Keep water troughs clean and use irrigation practices that do not lead to standing water. Stabling horses when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk can also reduce their chances of being bitten and infected.



## You Can...Enjoy the Outdoors

Outdoor recreational opportunities are one of the benefits of living in Idaho. Taking part in golfing, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking or boating is part of our lifestyle. Many outdoor activities occur around water, which is a breeding site for mosquitoes. This increases your chance of being bitten. Take precautions by wearing protective clothing and using repellents.



Although WNV does not spread from animals to people, hunters should always use

safe practices when handling wild game. Never harvest or eat wild game animals that appear sick. Wear latex or rubber gloves when cleaning and processing game, and always cook game meat thoroughly before eating.

## You Can...Report Dead Birds

Dead magpies, ravens, crows, jays and raptors are frequently an early warning sign that mosquitoes carrying WNV are present in the area. These birds are very susceptible to WNV infection. You can help monitor WNV by reporting these dead birds to your District Health Department or local Fish and Game office. If testing of a dead bird is required, you may be asked to place the bird in a double-wrapped plastic bag. Always wear latex or rubber gloves when handling any dead animal.

